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# Homeschooling Halted in Botswana Due to U.N. "Rights of the Child" -- Other Countries Face Same

## U.N. Convention on Rights of the Child is Deceptive

By Sheryl Young

Last week, families in Mahalapye, Botswana (in Africa) were forced by the country's government to stop homeschooling their children under the rules of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The families could be due in court to face imprisonment within this month.

The Botswana judge acknowledged that the homeschooled children were well cared for and educated. However, he ruled that under the UNCRC, a country's governing authorities have the right to determine the best interests of the child. He allowed the children's homes to be invaded by police, and all homeschooling materials were confiscated from the parents so they could not continue.

The 1989 UNCRC is widely being accepted by countries around the world because it sets out more than 50 articles of "children's rights." Some sound very good, but the rules aren't working. For example:

-It's supposed to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. But in many countries kids are being sold as slave labor or into sexual slavery by their own parents for cash, and the U.N. has been unable to stop it.

-It states that children have the right to survival and full development. But the U.N. has been ineffective in stopping genocide such as in Darfur or in assuring food for starving children in Africa. The U.N. also can't enforce an end to tribal mutilation of girls' genitalia.

-A core principle of the UNCRC is that children be allowed to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. **Article 5** says that **the state shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or extended family or community.**

Yet, deep in the fine print of this document is found that countries adhering to the U.N. document have the right to judge what kind of education is best for the child. This judge told the parents that the state knows better what their children need.

Germany and Sweden have also enacted several measures against parental homeschooling due to their enforcement of the UNCRC.

-Another core principle is non-discrimination. **Article 2, Section 1** says that states (countries, nations) shall respect and ensure the rights set forth **without discrimination of any kind against the child's, parent's or guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political, national, ethnic or social origin...**

The halt to homeschooling appears to be discrimination, since some is done within a religious foundation. The homeschooling families in Botswana involved in the case are Seventh Day Adventists.

### Is public education always in the best interest of the child?

Public schools in many countries change curriculum, book content, teacher training and even history lessons to satisfy government agendas and popular trends.

Plus, homeschooled children have been known to excel above the statistics of publicly schooled kids. Here in the U.S., a July 2010 report cited at the National Home Education Research Institute states that homeschooled children do very well in college. The research also stated that homeschooling keeps kids safe from peer pressure toward drug and alcohol abuse and casual sexual behaviors.

ACT Inc., producer of the ACT college entrance exam, reported in 2006 that the average ACT composite score for homeschooled students was 22.4, compared to the national average composite of 21.1.

In 2003, homeschool students scored an ACT average of 22.6 compared to 20.9 for public school. All the way back to 1998, homeschooled children have excelled in several areas of the ACT scores as well as the composite score.

President Clinton signed the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was never ratified in the U.S. It hasn't been ratified in Botswana either, but it is being enforced.

During his campaign in 2008, President Barack Obama voiced intentions of pursuing the ratification of the UNCRC for the United States. American homeschooling has come under attack in several states including California, where a judge in 2008 thought that we were already supposed to be adhering to the U.N. doctrine.

If the U.N. could do something about making countries protect children from sex trafficking and other bigger dangers such as those mentioned above, maybe they wouldn't have time to bother parents who are trying to do the best thing for their children as they see fit.

Sources:

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). All bolding for the paraphrased sections in this article is the author's.

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